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## Washington State Parents for Parents Program

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### Findings of P4P Evaluations:

- Increased compliance in the court-ordered case plan
- Significantly increased compliance with court-ordered visitation
- Increased likelihood of reunification by 26%
- Decreased likelihood of termination of parental rights by 20%
- Positive changes in parent's attitudes
- Increased trust in CPS and awareness of case issues
- Parent's increased perceived control over case outcomes
- 79% of parents who received full P4P reunified

### Stakeholder Impressions of Parents for Parents

Parents for Parents is a critical element of our dependency process. Contact with Parent Allies helps people faced with a dependency understand the value of working collaboratively to achieve reunification. Without Parent Allies, the system is too adversarial to promote this goal. ~

#### ~ Dependency Judge

Parents for Parents provides my clients the tools, information, and insight to successfully and quickly engage in their case.

#### ~ Parent Attorney

Parents for Parents is an absolutely necessary program that is truly invaluable in the efforts to keep families together. ~

Parents for Parents is an essential component of early engagement of parents in resolving the issues that resulted in a dependency filing. ~

#### ~ Child Welfare Manager

### What is the Parents for Parents Program?

Parents for Parents (P4P) provides peer mentoring for families in the dependency court system. P4P provides early outreach and education that helps shift parental attitudes from anger and resentment to acknowledgment and acceptance and enhances parents' engagement in their court-ordered plans. Mentoring is provided by Parent Allies (PA)s – parents who have successfully navigated the child welfare system, demonstrate professionalism, accept responsibility for the factors involved in their child's dependency, and are eager to help other parents succeed. PAs receive extensive training and supervision. P4P is a Promising Practice per the University of Washington's Evidence Based Practice Institute based upon the findings of Washington State's King County model.

### Why is Parents for Parents Important?

Parents for Parents increases the well-being of children in foster care as their parents receive peer mentoring that\*:

- Encourages their positive engagement with child welfare stakeholders
- Increases their compliance with court ordered services
- Increases their engagement in the juvenile dependency court process

*\*Reference ~ National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges: Parents for Parents Outcome Evaluation; Reno, NV, 2011 and 2013)*

Trauma to children is reduced as parents overcome the issues leading to their child's dependency, establish stable homes, and safely reunify with their children.

### Parents for Parents Program Components

**I) Shelter Care Hearing Outreach** – PAs meet with parents in the courthouse at their first hearing after the filing of a petition by child protection services. Parents are terrified, confused, angry and alone. The PA introduces him/herself as someone who was once in the parents' shoes and got their kids back. This gives parents someone they can relate to and offers them hope that reunification is possible. This, in turn, helps diffuse negative attitudes, and encourages parents to be open-minded and engage in the process. PAs also share information about available resources and invite parents to a Dependency 101 class.

**II) Dependency 101** - This one-time, two-hour, PA-led class educates parents about the dependency system they must navigate to have their children returned. It provides tools and resources that empower parents to be successful and to understand and support the needs of their children. Several PA's share their success stories, and child welfare system stakeholders provide information about their roles and what parents can do to succeed. All speakers reinforce the message that return of the child is everyone's top priority.

**III) On-going Support** - PAs support parents attending additional dependency hearings, providing them with follow-up support and encouragement. Telephone support is given to assist and encourage parents to overcome barriers to success in their case.

### More information

- P4P Homepage: <http://www.childrenshomesociety.org/reunification>
- P4P Research: <http://www.uwcita.org/parents-for-parents-education-and-engagement-for-parents-in-dependency/>
- For more information, please contact Ambrosia Eberhardt, Statewide Family Impact Manager, Children's Home Society of Washington  
Email: [Ambrosia.Eberhardt@chs-wa.org](mailto:Ambrosia.Eberhardt@chs-wa.org) Phone: (509) 310.3020